

A PAGE OF HISTORY

Meinhart the Second (of Görs) who was Meinhart the First of Tyrol, the man who formed the Province into a political unit in the thirteenth century, giving it the name of his castle near Meran, Schloss Tyrol, is little remembered today. His wife, Elisabeth, on the other hand, still lives in the memory of the people. The widow of the Emperor Conrad the Fourth and mother of Conradin, she gave Tyrol the impressive background of the Staufar Empire. She set up a permanent memorial to her unhappy son in the Monastery of Stams. Meinhart, through the marriage of his daughter with the son of the Emperor Rudolf I, established the first connection with the House of Hapsburg.

Popular interest concentrates much more on the stirring story of Meinhart's grandchild Margaretha Maultasch ("Pocket-Mouthed Meg"), who drove out her first husband to marry her own cousin. She was excommunicated by the Church on the grounds that this marriage involved a double sin. It was long years before the ban was lifted. She married her second husband and only son; in 1363 she made over "the land on the Esch and the Inn Valley with Schloss Tyrol and all else appertaining thereto" to Rudolf the Endower. Fourteen gentlemen of Tyrol put their seals to the deed in the name of all inhabitants of the Duchy, of the "clergy and laymen, nobles and commoners, whether living in the towns or in the country". With this impressive voluntary deed Tyrol began its life in the federation of Austrian Provinces. It soon found an opportunity to prove its loyalty.

Friedl with the Empty Pocket, popular despite his outlawry and excommunication, confirmed the freedom of the Province at the Diet of Meran in 1422, when for the first time burghers

of the ice world of the Otzal may enjoy eternal spring the same evening 9000 feet below amid vines and chestnut trees. The modern mountain



railways make the contrast even more unbelievable.

THE TYROLESE. You will find among the people of Tyrol as many contrasts as those which characterise its landscape. To Tyrol the Bavarians came from the north and north-east, from the west and north-west the Allemannians, and from the south, Latin races infiltrated. The remnants of an aboriginal population whose source is obscure sought refuge from the invaders among the crags and crannies of the mountains where their descendants are to be found to this day. Throughout the length and breadth of the country you will come across curious names of village and pasture which recall these various races. Tyrol, which resembles Switzerland in this respect, managed to weld these various tribes—and later the people of German, Italian and Ladinian race—together, to live peacefully in a small area. Today these elements have overcome the limitations of nationalism and feel themselves to be above all Tyrolese. Once again the forces making for unity proved stronger than those tending towards separation, and the passes, as the word implies, have become links, not barriers.

In Tyrol, inhabitants, dialect, costume, methods of building houses and of agriculture

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Egger-Lienz: Dances of Death.

differ from valley to valley and often from village to village. Strong, blond giants are to be found side by side with dark-haired, slender, agile men. In a few disproportionately-built men and women lives on the race of the giants of legend.

As the peasant, so his cattle. In the valley of the Lower Inn the cattle are heavily built and piebald; in the Upper Inn Valley there is a lightly built, grey type, rich in milk, growing in grace and agility as the pasturage becomes more scanty and difficult of access.

In the mountain villages and remote enclaves there still survive many individual specimens of breeds which are otherwise becoming extinct.

342 The inhabitant of the valley of the Upper Inn builds his house of stone, he of
592 Lower of wood. The one keeps house and farm undivided; the other divides up
184 the farm and even the house, so that not only may several families live under one roof, but in the four corners of a large kitchen there are sometimes four ranges, each belonging to a different person who is expected to keep within the imaginary lines which mark out his own share of the floor. The Lower Inn rings with laughter and song and no one is ashamed of an illegitimate child. The inhabitant of the Upper Inn is reserved and sparing of speech; with him, the smouldering of no less violent passions is not easily to be detected.

197 There are many varieties of dialect. The people of the Ötztal call "Ferner"
184 what those of the Zillertal name "Kees" and which are called "Gletscher"—glaciers—only by the town-dwellers. The drawling and slurred vowel sounds, the clipped nasal consonants of the mountain dwellers, recall the speech of Latin races. The accent of the lowlander, in contrast, is graceful and often almost affected. In the broad valleys branching off from the main Inn Valley the inhabitants of the inner and outer valleys have little in common. In the Gschnitztal, for instance, Trins is a Romanish settlement, whereas Gschnitz at the foot of the valley is of German origin. One consequence of all this is that anyone who moves from his own parish, even if only to a neighbouring one, is regarded all his lifetime as an "immigrant".

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Volders.

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THE ARTS. In Tyrol, art belongs to the soil. The supreme period of its architecture is reflected not only in venerable abbeys, stately mansions, churches and the houses of the nobility, but also in many a farm-house and its outbuildings, in wayside crucifixes, chapels and shrines.

Apart from the imposing buildings and monuments which served the interests of the aristocracy and the well-to-do citizens—the most important example of these is the Tomb of Maximilian beneath the lofty vault of the Hofkirche in Innsbruck—the simpler output of native craftsmen is often impressive and singularly moving as, for instance, that gem of art, the little rococo church in the dreamy hamlet of Gschnitz. Built in the spirit of devotion, its existence threatened on all sides—from avalanches and landslides from the mountain above, from the torrential river below in the valley—it seems amid the forces of nature to do honour to God in the Highest, man upon Earth, and to act as a gracious mediator between the two.

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The artistic sense of the people is most apparent in the national costumes and

But if one asks what, in view of its many contradictions, Tyrol really is, one is again confronted by something strange and mysterious. It is a fact that, looked at from outside—for instance from Salzburg or from Vorarlberg, Bavaria or Italy—Tyrol presents the picture of a close-knit unit. Is it the mountains which hold together the Province (which in all documents is referred to as the "Land in the Mountains" because it is entirely dominated by mountains and because from north to south the whole territory consists of mountainous country which never descends to the level of the plains)? Is it a gift conferred by the gods for good or ill fortune; is there some idea of sacred mountains behind the song which tells of the "Holy Province" of Tyrol? ...

The peculiarly pious devotion of the mountain dweller to his homeland and his liberty has done as much to create the feeling of unity as has the great history of Tyrol which people keep alive today in many customs and many forms.



Stams; Cistercian Monastery.